

ISSUE #90: A HILL TO DIE UPON, REDEMPTION + A LOT OF REVIEWS

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LANCE KING

A MOMENT IN CHIROS

ETHERIC PROGRESSIVE POWER METAL FROM THE FORMER VOICE OF PYRAMAZE, BALANCE OF POWER, FOR FANS OF REDEMPTION, DREAM THEATER AND SYMPHONY X WITH A NOD AT GREATS LED ZEPPELIN

Lance King is world renowned in the underground as a melodic metal vocalist, singing on over 25 worldwide releases over the last 21 years. This fact is impressive in itself, but what is truly special about Lance is his ability to morph his voice to fit any mood and intensity of a song, he's proved this over the years by adding a very "special something" to every album he has been a part of. Said to have the golden touch, Lance's voice just seems to connect the dot's making head banging metal also into a good song.

On the last day of June, 2011 Lance decided to invite some of his musical friends to co-write songs with him as he ventured into his first solo album. An act of faith only knowing their work, never working with them before creating music. In just two months, those involved had created an epic masterpiece, quite a feat indeed based on the quality of this release.

In under three months, A MOMENT IN CHIROS was mixed and mastered and off to the presses, perhaps the fastest created music in history? This album was meant to be out by 11/11/11 and is destined to stand the test of time. The album's concept is based on the 11:11 time prompt phenomena happening to over 75 million people around the world, Lance is one of these people, and has dived in deep to find more about what it's all about. This album is one man's journey as a seeker of truth looking for answers to the world's greatest mysteries.

Lance has chosen "Human Trafficking" (sex slavery), one of the fastest growing criminal activities worldwide as the charitable cause he would like to champion, profits from this album will go to efforts to abolish this slave trade worldwide through an organization called "NOT FOR SALE"!

Boasting great creativity and performances by these fine musicians: Jacob Hansen (Beyond Twilight, Invocator & Anubis Gate), Kim Olesen (Anubis Gate), Michael Harris (Darkology, Thought Chamber), Toré St Moren (Jorn), Fred Colombo (Spheric Universe Experience), Markus Sigfridsson (Darkwater / Harmony), Kevin Codfert (Adagio), Michael Hansen & Shane Dhiman (Phonomik), Malek Ben Arbia (Myrath) & Morten Gade Sørensen (Pyramaze, Wuthering Heights), Elyes Bouchoucha, Malek Ben Arbia, Anis Jouini (Myrath) & Mitheria (Bruce Dickinson and MANY others).

Produced by: Kim Olesen (Anubis Gate) & Jacob Hansen, (Volbeat, Heathen, TYR, Amaranthe, Communic, Mercenary, Onslaught, Rob Rock, Blotted Science, Raunchy, Pretty Maids, Cryoshell)



TRACKLIST: (Time prompt - song title)

- 11: A Sense of Urgency
- 22: Awakening
- 33: Manifest Destiny
- 44: A Given Choice
- 55: A Moment in Chiros
- 66: Dance of Power
- 77: Kibou
- 88: Infinity Divine
- 99: Joy Everlasting
- 10:10 Sacred Systems
- 11:11 Transformation

ARTIST: Lance King

TITLE: A Moment in Chiros

UPC: 734923006428

CAT#: NMR559

GENRE: Rock/Metal/Progressive

GEOGRAPHIC STRENGTH:

USA, Canada, Europe, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, and Russia.

RELEASE DATE: 11/11/11



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METAL TRACKS

Hard-news-for-metal-heads



A HILL TO DIE UPON Interpreting the Omens...

By Chris Gatto

It's rare that a new band comes right out of the gate with a debut that stuns listeners and critics alike with its metallic intensity, but that's just what A Hill to Die Upon did with their opus *Infinite Titanic Immortal*. This year the blackened death metal titans from the American Midwest released the follow up *Omens*, so all signs point toward a skull session with drummer Michael Cook.

Chris Gatto: Give me a quick recap of A Hill to Die Upon's history.

Michael Cook: We started in November of 2004 and three months later we played our first show. It was just Adam and I, but we got a good reaction. We recorded several demos, each progressively more and more heavy. We had nearly a dozen different members over the next four years as we struggled to find committed musicians and our own sound. In 2008 we did a two song demo that got us signed to Bombworks Records. Since then we have released *Infinite Titanic Immortal*, toured here in the American Midwest, Mexico, and Europe, and then released *Omens* this year.

CG: Is it true that the band is back down to the brothers Cook and how does that affect any live shows?

MC: It is true, though it doesn't really affect our show that much. Adam and I remain the core of the band and have simply used fill-ins for our shows. We have had some good help recently. Andreas from Solace the Day and fellow student of mine, Nick Olson, are the most recent.

CG: How do you feel the band's sound has developed between *Infinite* and *Omens*? Is the doomy feel a progression, or just the atmosphere of the subject matter?

MC: First of all, I appreciate that you distinguish between the two. I would say a little bit of both. We felt musically we moved forward, but that we also represented the emotion of the album through the music better. There is some of *Omens* that is distinctly *Omens*, but some of it simply our progression as a band. We both feel the lyrics and music are married better on our last album.

News bullets

Gideon have released a new single from their upcoming album *Milestone*. You can see the lyric video for "Prodigal Son" here: [youtube.com/watch?v=SgxOds4VFE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgxOds4VFE). *Milestone* comes out this summer on Facedown Records and Gideon will be heading out on the *Scream the Prayer* summer tour with **Demon Hunter**, **Emery**, and **Sleeping Giant**.

Evanescence and **Chevelle** will join Halestorm and others on the third annual Carnival of Madness Tour.

Stryper is touring right now (and reports are that they're sounding great).

Letter to the Exiles, a Long Island, NY, hardcore-influenced metal band, has signed with Facedown Records. Their debut album, *Make Amends*, should hit August 14th.

Rex Scott and his guitarist buddy **Glenn Thomas** have released a great new album under the moniker **GX Project**, which sounds a lot like **X-Sinner**, which sounds a lot like...

To Speak of Wolves have "a ferocious new album," *Find Your Worth, Come Home*, already praised by heavy music tastemaker *Revolver* as "sweeping, anthemic metalcore." Two days after releasing the album's first epic video, the band is teasing fans with the debut of a fourth track from the anticipated album, "A Simple Thought That Changed Everything." Listen at: <http://blpr.co/TSOWASimpleThought>

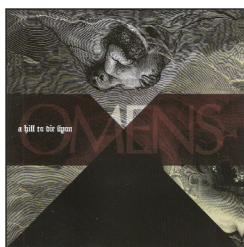
In case you haven't heard (you know, if you're fairly focused on only classic metal from the past and you have a disdain and mistrust of anything young and new with the letters "core" in the description), there is this band called **For Today** that are tagged as leaders of the "Spirit-filled hardcore" movement. Well, you need to check them out. The Jesus metal warrior inside you will burst with praise to our God for unleashing a band like this on the masses (and the world is listening). Catch 'em. I'm serious.

P.O.D. have a new album coming out on Razor & Tie this July 10th, called *Murdered Love*. It's way better (and heavier) than their last album.

The new **Liberty N' Justice** CD, *Hell Is Coming To Breakfast* is out now Roxx Records. The CD features Jani Lane of Warrant, Jack Russell of Great White, Donnie Vie of Enuff Z'Nuff and many more guest artists!

John Schlitt's new album, *The Greater Cause*, is actually reason for great praise. I was skeptical, but the old dude has cranked out a solid, hard rock release. **Petra** fans will be proud.

As I Lay Dying and **The Devil Wears Prada** are both heading out with Slayer, Motorhead and Slipknot on the *Rockstar Energy Drink Mayhem Festival* (insert *Talladega Nights* joke about corporate sponsorship here).



NEW MUSIC Spotlight:

A Hill to Die Upon | cont'd:

CG: The lyric "I am the black space between the stars / I am the darkness that can be felt" seems to set the tone for the whole album. What is the meaning behind this – or should each listener interpret their own meaning, such as dealing with depression, etc.?

MC: Those were the last words written for the album. You might say that they are the thesis of the album; the one thing you need to take away. It is really a realignment of symbols. Christians have always seen themselves as the light. Today, however, we are less like a star and more like the darkness around the stars. The stars will burn out and pure, unadulterated darkness will come. Of course, anyone can make it mean what they want. We aren't against that, but that can only go so far. If that is all the listener ever does, they will never learn anything about what the song actually means.

CG: I love the diversity of interests (sci fi, mythology, etc.) in your lyrics. What things inspire you to make great metal? Also, what other bands inspire you?

MC: Ancient history, science fiction, mythology, philosophy, warfare, and art itself have always interested us. We as a species have very fascinating ways of replacing our god. It is the human experience, you might say, that we are interested in. Thus, our mythologies, ancient history and literature are fascinating and essential to understanding ourselves. So anything that says something profound about us as people is important to us and will then, in some way, get translated into our music. But on a side note, read Isaac Asimov for science fiction. He is the best. As far as bands... Behemoth has always been a huge influence. We also like Watain, Old Man's Child, Satyricon, Rush, and Naglfar.

CG: I understand that you started as a hardcore band. It seems you've really come into your own as a black/death hybrid. Do you see yourselves as evolving further, or have you found your niche as a band?

MC: Of course. I think it would be arrogant of us to think that we have ceased to be influenced by other music and reached the pinnacle of artistic diversity. That being said, I think we are very excited about the music on the last record. We are more content with our latest achievement than anything else we have done and I think it will stick around a while. The reason we played hardcore was because we loved how heavy it was. It was the heaviest thing we had heard in 2004. Our style, to us, is just as dark and heavy as we can make it. When we heard death metal, we got heavier. When we heard black metal, we got darker.

CG: Is there anything about AHTDU that marks it as an American version of this style of music, as opposed to

the dominant European style?

MC: Calling our style American might be too objective, as I know there are still some hardcore influences in our music. Overall, I suppose the American spirit, the aggressive nature, comes out well in this music and how we approach music in general. In all the history of our country, we have had only seventeen years of peace. There just seems to be an intensity to American bands that is unique.

CG: What role does God play in the band or in your life personally?

MC: God never allowed Himself to be represented by an idol when his children built the tabernacle. He was the empty space in the holiest of holy. He is nothing, because there is nothing to properly represent him. Yet, He is everything. In that sense, God plays no role. God is the wheel, if you will. Personally we are trying to align ourselves with it. As a band, we are trying to represent, put into art, that choice. I'm not totally comfortable with how eastern that metaphor turned out, but I think it's still sufficient.

CG: Do you take much flak from other bands for your association with Christian music?

MC: All the time. It's mixed, though. Once we were in *Terrorizer* twice in the same issue. One instance was positive and one was negative. We Christians have done a fair job of making ourselves unpopular. If we had known from the beginning that our career would be limited by our religion, we might have chosen another art, but I now that we are here, we wouldn't trade it for anything. It's encouraging, though. Jesus told us to expect this.

CG: Where do you see metal music going in the near future?

MC: I think it is going to become a flavor of different genres. Black metal is disseminating into other genres very well. We already have blackened death, black n' roll, and an overall revival of Satan. In other words, I think it will undergo a diaspora into even more inventive genres. But that is just a theory. If Isaac Asimov were alive, he could hypothesize quite accurately, I think. Eventually it will die. It is a music built on rebellion. When there is nothing left to fight, it will lose its power.

CG: What is the air speed velocity of a laden sparrow?

MC: African or European?

CG: Anything else you want to communicate with your fans?

MC: We have some incredible things in the works right now. Keep your eyes and ears open for news. Also, we will be in Europe in the Spring. If you live on the continent, come support the western wolves!

LANCE KING | Countdown to the Karios

BY JEFF MCCORMACK



JM: How have things been going since the album was released?

LK: It is off to a good start and people seem to like it. The reviews in the media are good and it is getting some airplay right out of the gate.

JM: Would you say this style of music is still struggling in America?

LK: Yes, it is a challenge and is still kind of underground, but has its niche. I tend to have a more melodic approach, especially when it comes to catchy choruses; though I did not do that much on this album, but let myself be a little bit more proggy on this one.

JM: As the manager of a label where most all of the artists fall into that melodic metal vein, have you seen the scene grow much over the years, as far as sales and fan base?

LK: I think melodic metal has not really grown any, but it also hasn't shrunk any either, it seems to stay pretty consistent, and has for a long time. It has seemed to shrink a little in Europe and Japan, but in the States it has been pretty steady. It is kind of hard to really say, because stylistically the scene has probably grown, but you do not really see it in sales, because of all of the downloading and stuff. So the sales haven't really changed, though the amount of bands and fans has probably grown a bit in the last ten years, at least in my niche. If you ask a major label, they will probably say it is dismal, but they tend to have different styles they manage.

JM: To me it seems to have grown, just because you consistently put out so many great albums in this genre. It seems like there are just more and more bands playing this style.

LK: And I am not even saying "yes" to most of the stuff I have the opportunity to

put out; I am just putting out the better of the crop, so it is amazing. Technology has made it so that almost any musician can record, and done fairly well, from home as well as a studio. Of course, it also means there is a lot of music out there made at home that is not worthy. So, everywhere you look you find music.

Back in the day, say like the mid-'80s, there was probably only about 80 bands that were championed by the major labels and that anyone knew anything about, and that was about all there was. Now, you can see anywhere up to 5,000 releases in a single year – and I am just talking metal releases.

JM: When you receive a promo from a band, what do you mainly look for before deciding to work with them?

LK: What I had been looking for was mainly three criteria, though I am expanding that now in order to narrow it down further and get stronger material. In the past it was a lot of great music that I enjoy. I also look for a name that is marketable and doesn't suck. I have seen a lot of names that are horrible, that I doubt people would remember, and there are times I won't even listen to the music based on that. It is that big of a deal. In the '80s, what the band looked like really mattered, but now not so much. But more recently I have come to realize just how important it is that a band be able to slay onstage.

Bands really have to have the ability in a live show to connect with the audience in order to have longevity. So that has to be a part of it – the music and the live show have to be entertaining. I look at a lot more videos of bands on stage now, to see who has that ability. Bands make most of their money from shows and merchandise, so they have to be able to deliver great entertainment.

Back in the '80s, bands went the extra mile to have a great stage show and persona. Bands like Kiss were an extreme case, but the goal then was to really put on an entertaining show and many bands had that down. That is what is needed more today.

JM: You've been involved with so many great bands and releases in the past, so why a solo album now, and what is the goal?

LK: I have been blessed to be involved in a lot of cool things and have learned a lot of interesting lessons and had great experiences; as well as some that weren't so great. There are definitely dynamics in bands that can make things interesting, and ego is a band-killer. If you can't check your ego at the door when you get together as a band – any and every time – you're going to have problems.

Over the past ten years, I have played in two to three bands at a time consistently. I was even in a cover band, to keep active and keep my chops up for the international acts I was with. The cover band started out fun and we did it well, but over time it began sucking my creativity out of me, and I started falling into bad habits as far as stage and vocal performance, as well as the fact it was not really going anywhere. I finally just said I have to quit "that," and "this," and "that," and come back to focus on something that I am really into. So I quit all of my bands, took some time off in order to get hungry again and build up a passion in order to make good music again.

During that time I began thinking about what it was I wanted to write about, theme-wise. As I began putting together random song themes, I realized it wasn't enough. Over the past few years – and the last year more heavily – I started soul searching, as well as getting into things like conspiracy theories, religion, spirituality and lots of weird new-agey kind of stuff, and almost any kind of thing you can find on the internet.

The whole doom and gloom, 2012 Mayan prophecy scenario and all the fear mongering everywhere, and various radio hosts constantly putting out negative stuff – it started to affect me, putting me into a really dark and angry state. Finally, I just had an epiphany. It was all CRAP! Then I started seeing things differently, which ties into the song "The Awakening."

A little later, I had run into the time prompts – the whole 11:11 time theory thing, and was interested, because I had been experiencing that since I was about fourteen. I began looking up and finding meanings, and what they meant to me personally – because I do not think they mean the same thing to everybody. There are different meanings to everybody out there experiencing things like that, and how they would apply to each other's lives varies.

So, the general theme that I got was that there is a sense of urgency that people are feeling, because of all of the negative stuff going on in the media and politics. But if you stop to think about it, does it really affect your daily life? Only if you let it – then it does. But if you realize you do not even have to let it into your life; you can tune it out, change the channel. In truth, most of us do not really know the truth of what is going on – the more we as a society learn, the more we change. Scientists say one thing today, then a decade later finds it to not be so true.

So, we really need to not worry about it as much, and realize that this place is a

the law and not the spirit of the law. Obviously I am not saying all of them are like this – but a large amount of them are. For the longest time I was turned off to going to churches, because they were always so cold and dead. Then I finally walked into one that I really felt the Spirit in, that I enjoyed being in and really felt the love from the people. Church should be a transforming place, but if it doesn't have any of that in it – if it doesn't have the Holy Spirit in it, it is just like any other big building.

My concept of the 11:11 thing is – I think to me it was a kind of calling. Basically I felt I was being prompted to a call to action. It was my angels or higher power getting in touch with me and put me back on path. Like putting me back on task to my mission here. So I started wondering “what is my mission?” So I put together an album that I felt would help reconnect people. I felt my gift was the gift of voice, so I wanted to put that to use to do that.

So the concept that I got from all of this and the information online – as I started praying and getting in contact, the messages that I received were

***“You can't see that aspect of it –
but some may just have a larger aspect of God light in them than others.”***

big mirror of whatever you put out into it. If you believe in all of that negativity, it is going to be a big part of your life and if you live that all the time, you will live in fear. Or if you are going to live life to the fullest, have fun, be kind to everyone – then that is what you are going to live and experience. So, all of that kind of became part of the theme and message.

JM: I was reading up on the 11:11 phenomenon some, because I could connect with the street light phenomenon they speak of – where street lights go out when approached. I have had that happen a lot – lots of times over the years. I always just joked about it, saying my inner spirit light is so bright it puts out light sensitive equipment – but I see that is part of this theory.

LK: Well, don't totally laugh it off, the energy you put off is so big it could affect it – I believe that is true. You can't see that aspect of things, but some have more of God's light in them than others. I have had that kind of thing actually happen to me in my house. Only certain kinds of light do it, but they do it all the time, and it is weird.

JM: Yeah, it is tough to knock things when we really have a limited realm we live and see within. We do not see that “spiritual realm” that is spoken of in Scripture. Biblical cosmology is something people are rarely taught or understand what is being said when speaking of the heavens, the air, the earth, under the earth, the unseen realm, etc.

LK: Yes, there is a lot of that in Scripture, and we are kind of trapped in this three-dimensional world and we are taught and conditioned to believe that what we see is all there is. Our schools teach it, along with things like teaching the “theory” of evolution as if it is fact. Yet there are so many scientists still that do not believe it. There is a lot more than what we see and are taught in this physical form.

JM: True, the schools have become nothing but indoctrination factories of the humanistic, materialistic mind-set. If you can't touch it, see it, or scientifically prove it, then it must be rejected. From an early age, people are programmed to ignore the unseen spiritual side of things – they can't allow that to be believed...

LK: No, no, right, that would leave too much open to esoteric principles – you'd have more power than them.

JM: Right! They have to take away the whole idea of faith in a power higher than them. If they do not, then you may have people believing in a higher power than them, and therefore not blindly obeying them. They have to keep the people believing what they want people to believe so that we don't question them or their authority. So, they belittle and strip away all things spiritual and replace it with materialistic ideas only.

LK: I don't think churches are immune to it either, because they want to be the weight bearer. They want to be that midpoint – for you to come to them so they can connect you to God. When, in actuality, everyone can have a direct personal relationship with God, and should. There is this disconnect, I believe – and... well, I know this is not a popular thing with Christians, but I have a lot of problems with organized churches, because they end up becoming the Pharisees and zealots, who become more about procedure and the letter of

giving me a bigger picture. This whole thing and more led to a lot of the stories of the album – though it is hard to condense it all into a short song. There are a lot of key phrases in the lyrics that mean something to me, that maybe everyone won't get or may take a while to get. The intent – the purity of intent from start to finish – was there to help connect people to truth – God's truth.

What I believe the 11:11 prompt really is, is a moment in kairos – a moment when you are given an opportunity to connect with God and His plans for you – His destiny for you – and you can miss it if you are not paying attention. I released the album on 11-11-11 on purpose, because I really believe that is a special day. I believe that – and I know I am going to take some heat on this, but I think I can tell you this, because we're actually talking to the Christian population here – but I think Christ is coming back and the time is now. He may not come back as we have heard or expect, but I think life is going to get really interesting here pretty soon.

I was brought up in a pretty very liberal new age type family. My mother is a metaphysical healer – she does Reiki. Both parents were health nuts and were real children of the sixties and seventies – raised as hippies. My dad is a theological philosopher, so he read up on all of the different religions and theologies and has written a book about his take on all of that and it is pretty “out there.” So I am a product of that. But I rebelled against a lot of that, and I have my own beliefs and thoughts and became a lot more conservative and a lot more Christian.

I have come back to some of that in a way, now that my spirituality has grown to the point where I am really filled with the Holy Spirit and am able to make that connection and have communications to the esoteric realms like a lot of other spiritual beliefs believe in. Now I know some people might get freaked out when the conversation turns to making connections with other entities or person – and they'll say, “Oh, you're talking to demons,” and that sort of thing. I believe that is possible, but I do not believe the people I am connecting to are that. I have definitely been in a war with those beings, and have felt them a lot more lately. I have had to learn how to deal with that, and wow, it is such an intense energy right in your diaphragm – right where I sing from. That is where I get it when those entities are around me – and it hits hard.

So, with prayer and other things – like the Star of David I have on the cover – which is actually the same as the Mercaba – which is a three dimensional version of the Star of David. I am not sure why the Star of David has never been projected in a three dimensional way, and I might be crazy, but I believe them to be the same thing. So that is part of the symbolism contained in and on the album. There is a lot of symbolism I learned as I was digging through the information and some of it is kind of kooky stuff and some is intriguing. It is really esoteric – the concepts and stuff like ... well, we really don't have the time to get into it, we could talk on that for days.

Some people will probably think I am real loopy, but given the proper amount of time I could make my case and have it be understood and appreciated, I think. Whether or not it is agreed with is a whole other matter, but I could make the case for the concepts behind it, and what I am singing about.



What Redemption Says

BY JONATHAN SWANK

WITH *THIS MORTAL COIL* – THE BAND’S 5TH FULL-LENGTH RELEASE – THESE TALENTED PROGRESSIVE METAL MASTERS ARE DELVING INTO EASILY THEIR MOST CHALLENGING SUBJECT MATTER TO DATE – MAN’S MORTAL NATURE. GIVEN THE SPIRITUAL NATURE OF THE LYRICS AND THE WISE AND SOBER MANNER IN WHICH THE TOPIC IS PRESENTED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF HEAVY METAL, I COULDN’T PASS UP AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR WHAT REDEMPTION HAS TO SAY. MASTERMIND NICK VAN DYK – NO STRANGER TO CONFRONTATIONS WITH MORTALITY HIMSELF (RECENTLY RECOVERING FROM TREATMENT OF MYELOMA) – GRACIOUSLY AGREED TO FIELD SOME OF THE TOUGHEST QUESTIONS I COULD THROW HIS WAY.

Doc: The new album is amazing. I have to admit, after the first reviews I saw online I was concerned that something was wrong with the Redemption chemistry. Let me tell you, I don’t hear that at all listening to the CD version of this release. Reminds me of the emotional intensity of *The Fullness...* plus the heaviness of *Judgment...* amazing. So how do you feel about the release and how has it been received so far with media and fans?

Nick: First, thank you for the kind words. In answer to your question, I have to be honest and say I am completely baffled by complaints about production. I think this has the clearest mix of anything we’ve done. It is objectively NOT a

“hot master” as some have erroneously said. I spent more than three times as much on the production of this record as any other we have done. There are changes I would have made if we’d had a bit more time – there always are. But it’s not as though this is poorly mixed. It’s selling briskly, but I can’t help but think these ridiculous comments about production have hurt it. Frankly, it’s pretty disheartening. But you can’t please everybody, I suppose.

As for the record itself, I’m still a little too close to it to rank it in terms of our discography but it’s definitely *Redemption*, and I think songs like “Dreams

“I live my life as a person of quiet faith who falls short on a daily basis of who he’d like to be as a person, and picks himself up the next day trying his best to live up to higher standards. I will always fail – that’s what it is to be human. I will let Grace handle things at the end of the day.”

From The Pit” and “Departure Of The Pale Horse” belong up there with some of the better things I’ve written. I’m not sure there is something that rises to the level of “Black & White World” or “Sapphire,” but then those are very, very special songs – lightning in a bottle type of moments from a composer’s standpoint.

In what ways was the writing process for this new release different (if at all) from previous works? In what ways were you looking to improve or alter the approach/sound, etc.?

There was no conscious decision to make major changes, although I hope to become a better songwriter with each release. We’ve always tried to marry very aggressive, heavy riffing with strong melody – I think this is one of Redemption’s signature aspects and part of what separates us from a lot of prog metal bands. With each record I have tried to push harder on combining those two disparate elements and the decision to work with Neil Kernon, who has created some records that are very heavy sonically, was in part influenced by this.

How was it working with Neil Kernon? Give me an example something that really shocked you about his approach (if at all) and something that made you ecstatic.

I’m afraid things were a bit more pedestrian! :) Neil is professional, detail-oriented and a very hard worker – rather like myself, if I can be permitted some immodesty. :) I wasn’t surprised by anything that he did, really. He did add the opening vocal harmony before the song in “Perfect,” as well as the isolated string intro to “Let It Rain,” both of which I think turned out rather well, so when I heard those ideas it did bring a smile to my face. That’s probably as close as I came to being ecstatic. :)

This was a very challenging project to mix. We had every possible disaster strike: failed Internet connections, lost files, Pro Tools systems crashing left and right, a host of ghost-in-the-machine issues in the studio, another studio where guitar solos were being “re-amped” was struck by lightning causing it to lose power for 36 hours (I guess this could be considered “shocking” in the literal sense), etc. It was a nightmare. So the overwhelming feeling upon completion was one of relief rather than shock or ecstasy.

As follow-up to that, in what way did Neil enhance or reshape the Redemption sound?

The biggest differences are guitar tone, where we have a decidedly “metal” guitar tone as opposed

to previous records which were more of a hard rock guitar tone if you will, and in the separation of the instruments. The bass, for example, really pops out on this record – likewise, the cymbal work. This separation and clarity is something for which Neil is known. It makes complaints about the production that much more of a head-scratcher.

There is ferocity in the guitar playing this time around and I would assume that was purposeful. Was this an exorcising of demons so to speak? Haha.

Some of it is probably the combination of the composition effort to make some of the songs heavier, and the production elements (guitar tone, etc.) I don’t think I felt particularly more driven in the performance on this record than on others, but I did push Bernie on his solos. Bernie’s lead work is always great but I really wanted to emphasize the solos on this record. I remember a show we did a few years ago with a well-known prog rock band – their guitarist went to play a solo and fell to his knees and then leaned back almost to the point of lying down. I remember Bernie saying, “If you’re going to do that, what comes out of your guitar better be unbelievable.” :) Similarly, on this record where the sample says, “The funeral is about to begin!” right before the guitar solo, it better shred. So I told Bernie to really rip it up there and elsewhere, and I think his solos are the best he’s ever done. I made sure the solos are prominent in the mix – previous records have some great playing that is hard to discern.

Can you talk about the song “Noonday Devil”? Not only is it an incredible song musically, but lyrically deals with some pretty intense stuff.

Thank you. The concept of the “Noonday Devil” is essentially one of doubt. Whether one takes a spiritual point of view or not, we all have times when a little inner voice calls into question the point of our efforts ... that sort of “what’s the use?” despair that can set in when we are faced with a struggle. I had one moment of crisis in this way during my cancer treatment, where my biology hadn’t yet caught up with my therapy and I was still evincing some traces of the disease despite the brutal regimen that I underwent. It doesn’t work for everybody – only about 60% of newly-diagnosed patients can be cured, and although I had some favorable prognostic factors in my cancer cells and had responded well to initial treatment, there was no guarantee. So I was sitting there, watching the cancer markers persist in my blood despite the therapy, and I began to wonder if I was going to go through all this and die of cancer anyway – what

if I’d been through this horrible treatment for no reason? Eventually, I manned up and decided that if it hadn’t yet worked, I would simply lobby my physician for more poison. He smiled and said to wait two weeks, which I did (what else was I going to do?) and of course the markers came down. But it was a pretty powerful moment and one that I felt would be a good “turning point” in the flow of the record. It does mark, musically, a transition from the first half of the CD to the second half.

These songs, the intensity of the music and the story here ... I realize that this is inspired by your experiences in overcoming your battle with multiple myeloma. As a physician I empathize with what you went through, the chemotherapy, the doubt, the fears, etc. Can you share some of that experience and how it inspired the creation of This Mortal Coil.

In the answer to the previous question, frankly, I’ve said more than I’ve said anywhere else. I didn’t and don’t want this CD to be about me and my cancer diagnosis – that’s not only self-indulgent and narcissistic but it’s also very limiting. I wanted the CD to be about themes to which everybody can relate, and it’s therefore largely phrased in terms of confronting and coming to terms with our mortality – unlike the specifics of a cancer diagnosis, that’s something that everybody is going to have to contend with, unless they die suddenly in their sleep. So for me, the experience of going through this was simply a good foundation for writing music about dealing with mortality. It’s good subject matter for a Redemption CD – dark, but with positivity. It wasn’t as though I felt I had to write music as some kind of catharsis to deal with my diagnosis or treatment, it’s simply that after-the-fact it seemed obvious that it would make good subject matter. And hopefully, thus abstracted, it makes for material to which everybody can relate on some level. Redemption’s lyrics have always been about themes common to all of us as humans: our relationships with ourselves, with others, and with the world around us. Here, the focus is on our relationship with death.

Physical suffering and illness can drain the soul and weaken the body. How did you manage to create such an epic work of art in the aftermath of your treatments? And as a follow-up to that, what role did the band play in support of your efforts?

Again, thank you for the kind words. Music was not a particular catharsis, and as I said, I didn’t feel like I needed to write about cancer or do something musical directly related to my treatment or my disease. But writing for Redemption is part of my

continued on page 12



Lance King | cont'd

JM: Well, it is nice to know it is more than just scattered thoughts like some lyrics tend to be.

LK: This is the deepest album I have ever written – and there is intent and meaning behind every word of it. It is all good and my big hope is that Christians won't fear it as a deception, because it is not coming from that place at all. I can understand why some may fear it – but that is the fear type stuff we spoke of earlier and it is not applicable.

JM: I have heard others who have checked out the ideas behind the 11:11 concept comment that it did sound a bit new age.

LK: And it probably is a little bit in a way. I was being open to something that would not be blatantly labeled "Christian" – it wasn't in the Bible. I am open to a lot of synchronicity things like that and the more I become connected to God, the more open I become to any possibility. And because it is outside of what most would consider normal or orthodox, people will quickly say, "Nope, not for me." But I am hoping people will be open enough to give it a listen, read the lyrics and see for themselves what it is about and if they have questions – ask.

I am not hiding anything, but I have been a little subtle in things – well, I have been a lot less subtle with you in this interview than with anyone else (laughs). I have given you a lot more of the scoop – but I do not want to give it all away, either, because the mystery is part of the fun with albums as well as for truth seekers.

HEAVENS
METAL

Redemption | cont'd

"normal" life, and so part of "getting back to normal" post-treatment was resuming work on Redemption. My bandmates are my friends, first and foremost, and I found that the support and love of my friends was a very important ingredient in maintaining a positive attitude – which is all patients can really bring to the table. Whether it was Ray driving my car out to Arkansas, or Sean giving me a book on music that meant a lot to him, or Chris and his wife helping out at a party we had before my treatment started ... all these things matter.

In what ways, if any, did illness affect your ability to physically play your instruments?

This is a very interesting question and the first time I've been asked! The disease itself damages bones, and I did have bone damage (the worst of which was four broken vertebrae which made me lose a little more than an inch of height) but it didn't impede my ability to play an instrument per se. Treatment, however, was another story. I brought a couple of guitars and a little Pro Tools rig with me to Arkansas and it was my intent to play eight hours a day and really advance my proficiency at my instrument. After all, I had nothing else to do! The treatment left me so exhausted, though, that I couldn't pick up the instrument. I think in the six months I was in primary therapy, I might have played guitar for a total of two or three hours. I wrote the opening riff to the song "Path of the Whirlwind," and came up with the opening melody line in "Focus." Otherwise, I played virtually no guitar whatsoever for six months.

"Stronger Than Death" alludes to the power of the human will to overcome adversity. What is your view of the human will in man's ultimate destiny?

This must be the single most interesting question I've ever been asked related to Redemption. It reminds me of the guy about whom I wrote my senior thesis in college ... a political philosopher-cum-theologian named Reinhold Niebuhr. He delivered some lectures in the 1930s at Oxford and he published these later in two volumes, called *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. I remember a friend mocking them as being rather large in scope! This question invites a similarly lengthy response that I will only lightly touch upon here.

Spiritually speaking, I don't believe in pre-destination or determinism. I think Man has Free Will, and that exercise of that Free Will is in fact a key part in the soteriological drama that unfolds and in which Man is an active participant. From a more practical and less spiritual point of view, our will is a manifestation of the frame of mind in which we actively place ourselves every day, and as such is both cause and effect of chemical processes in the brain, which is after all just another organ in the body that affects the immune system and every other physiological process in the body. All things being equal, one who is equipped with a positive attitude and a "take no prisoners" approach to something like cancer therapy is going to fare better than one who is a defeatist. The brain impacts the response of the entire body to the disease and to therapy.

Let me put it in even more materialist (in the non-spiritual sense) terms. I have a friend who has a PhD in behavioral science, among many other advanced degrees – he is a bona fide genius and was chief scientific officer for the NSA, as one example. Anyhow, he told me that he'd had the reason to operate on a lot of monkeys in his day. When the monkeys came out of anesthesia, some would react by angrily biting the researcher, while others would be morose. The fighters were the ones that recovered and got on with their lives.

In terms of the song itself, triumph over death comes, however, not only from beating this particular manifestation of death – that's a temporary victory because in the end, we all die. The further triumph lies in robbing death of its power – either through a recognition that death is simply a part

of life and has no more meaning to it per se than that which we ascribe to it, or through a spiritual point of view that death is not the end. It doesn't require a belief in an afterlife, though, to rob death of its power. If one approaches death unafraid, and thinks of it only in terms of a natural end to things, one renders death impotent. I was close to death shortly after I began treatment – my kidneys were beginning to fail, I had bilateral pneumonia and a collapsed lung, my back was broken in four places and I was in a hospital without the immune system to recover from pneumonia or to tolerate a procedure to cement my crumbling vertebrae. But I was on very strong synthetic morphine (Dilaudid, for you and other doctors playing the home game!). I wasn't in pain, I wasn't frightened, and frankly had I died it would have been no big deal for me (though obviously I have a family that would have been sad). When it is my time, provided the circumstances themselves aren't terrifying (for example, a plane crash), I expect I'll be pretty calm about it.

Since *The Fullness of Time*, I have always noticed elements of faith and hope in the lyrics. What inspires you? What role does faith, God play in your life, music and art?

Like the previous one, this is another big question! There is definitely a current of positivity in Redemption's music, although it is often preceded by or intermingled with fear, doubt, and negativity. These are all natural feelings. What's important is that the positive – and here we might emphasize the well-worn Pauline threesome of faith, hope and love – prevail in the end.

I am a somewhat religious person, but I am not one who wears my religion on my sleeve. Nor is Redemption a religious band – I'm pretty sure the rest of the band are atheists, and we don't ever really discuss it. Thus, I'm quick to point out that lyrically, the faith which is part and parcel of Redemption's message could just as easily be faith in yourself, or faith in another, as it could be faith in a higher power. The concept of faith is a beautiful one, no matter where it is directed.

I'm afraid by an evangelical standard, I would fail miserably – that's not the type of Christian that I am. I remember having a disagreement with a girlfriend once. She was an evangelical Christian, and her youth pastor or whomever it was said he gave up playing basketball, even though he was good at it, because he had to put God first. I remember thinking how pathetic that was ... suppose that God had given this person the gift of excelling at basketball? Wouldn't it be the right thing to do, even if this person wanted to exclusively live for God, to play basketball to the best of his ability so as to honor the gift that God had given him? Likewise, I am not one of these people – and they exist, because I've met them

– who thanks God for the "gift" of cancer or my daughter's eye conditions as opportunities to grow closer to God. I tend to think of those people as well-intentioned but delusional.

I live my life as a person of quiet faith who falls short on a daily basis of who he'd like to be as a person, and picks himself up the next day trying his best to live up to higher standards. I will always fail – that's what it is to be human. I will let Grace handle things at the end of the day. So in a round-about answer to your question: my faith is there, beneath the surface, of everything I do, even though it rarely occupies front-of-mind as I make decisions. I am influenced by my faith to try to be a good person. The rest takes care of itself.

To me, there is a frenetic and emotional urgency with the sound of Redemption. How would you describe the music that you create?

I use the term "emotional urgency" with some frequency to describe Redemption, so perhaps there is something to that! :) There is tension, musically speaking, in a lot of the chord progressions we use – things like maintaining the root note while building chords in an ascending scale. We use a lot of suspended chords as well. The result is that the music often is in search of resolution, which mirrors the lyrics. Sometimes this can be frenetic – the end of "Suffocating Silence" being one example. Other times, it's more contemplative and less frenetic. Add to that the fact that hopefully the lyrics do strike a common chord with people, and you have something that people are able to connect with on an emotional level.

I have always loved the name of your band and I can't think of a more powerful experience in life than the process of redemption. What made you choose the name?

Thank you again! I admit, I do like the name as well. The name came to me when reflecting on my favorite film, *The Shawshank Redemption*. However, it also has the advantage of having a positive aspect to it – I always liked the band names Rush and Triumph because they both had this connotation of positive energy. Lastly, the word redemption has many meanings to different people and that allows some personalization – it likely means something different to a person of faith than to one who isn't spiritual, and that's fine as well.

What do you hope to accomplish through Redemption? And will we see more US tour dates?

I'm not sure that there is a set agenda, beyond attempting to make music that resonates with people. As long as it is rewarding for us – and here I'm not speaking of financial rewards because that's a hopeless situation given the state of the industry – we'll continue to do it. As for US tour

dates, I am the bankroll behind Redemption and there is a limit to my largesse – it has to make sense economically to tour and it is very, very challenging. The fact that I have a demanding "day job" which affords me the luxury of my music further complicates things – I can't just take three months off to go touring, even if I had the desire to live like a college student again and sleep in a van and drive around looking for the next 7-11 in order to go to the bathroom. I can tell you, I have no desire whatsoever to live like that, though – plus I do have a compromised immune system so even if I wanted to live in squalor, it wouldn't be a very smart idea from a medical standpoint. :)

Do you anticipate having a more limited touring schedule this time around due to health issues, or are you back to 100%?

As pertains to my health, the only issue (other than not living in squalor) would be ensuring that I can get my chemotherapy every Tuesday. The drug is readily available but the use of it in someone who is in remission is considered very aggressive and there are surprisingly few oncologists who will agree to follow my doctor's regimen – it would therefore take some choreography to ensure I get this drug uninterrupted. But I would think that would be manageable. There are other limits on touring, though – as discussed above. For the right opportunity, we can find a work-around for my availability (as we did on the Dream Theater tour where our guitar tech stood in for me on dates I wasn't able to make). It really boils down to whether or not something makes sense economically.

Finally, Nick, you have been through a lot in the past few years. In what ways can our readers support you, your family and the band?

It's extremely kind of you to ask. First, it's deeply rewarding when people connect with the music and are kind enough to express their thoughts – that is a very positive thing and my family and I appreciate it very much. Second, as I begin to emerge from the shadow of my own circumstances, I'm able to be primarily concerned with my daughter's eye condition. And here, I would ask that your readers support gene therapy and stem cell research. I do so with the understanding that it may be a challenge for some of your readers. Lastly, if one is looking to contribute to a charitable organization, I would suggest both the Myeloma Institute for Research & Technology at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock, Arkansas, and the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Really, though, it's enough to buy the music if you like it, and to let us know if it connects with you. Thanks so much for the thoughtful and interesting questions – it's been a pleasure answering them!

 **NICK**

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ALBUM REVIEWS



ALICE COOPER

WELCOME 2 MY NIGHTMARE

One of rock's most revered master storytellers returns with the sequel to his classic 1975 opus as Alice Cooper the man, not the band. Far from being merely a metal album, or even a classic rock album, Alice weaves his tangled web through a panorama of different styles, including rockabilly, surf rock, disco, and symphony, as viewed through a rock lense, and peoples his nightmare with ghouls, vampire seductresses and unrepentant sinners. Post-conversion Alice has been holding up a warning sign that there is a penalty for sin, and this album is no different. He continues the nightmare theme from the 1975 album, and weaves a story with guest stars and a lot of humor, lamenting that he's "been sleeping in a graveyard on the wrong side of the dirt." The main character refuses to believe until the very end that this is no nightmare – he's dead and about to enter eternal damnation. Quite possibly the best (and funniest) record the Coop has made in decades – a new classic. [Universal Music Enterprises] Chris Gatto



MORTIFICATION

SCRIBE OF THE PENTATEUCH

More than anything Mort main man Steve Rowe has ever said, his perseverance has always been his most visible fruit. Anytime his long-enduring Christian metal band Mortification puts out a new album, it is a blessing to the ears and the heart. Fans always clamor for a *Scrolls 2*, but the new album, *Scribe of the Pentateuch*, finds the ever-evolving band in bass-heavy thrash territory, with Steve's harsh (and occasional melodic) vocals rounding out the sound for a fair comparison to Ian Arkley's doomy bands Seventh Angel and My Silent Wake. Steve's bandmates in Wonrowe Vision make up this incarnation of Mort, so there are now 2 bands, 2 different sounds. *Scribe* has 6 songs, with 4 bonus tracks taken from 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2009 to give you good value for your \$. New Aussie metal from Mort! [Rowe Productions] Chris Gatto



WAR OF AGES

RETURN TO LIFE

Holding faithfully to the same path and style as its previous release, there are no surprises here and no real groundbreaking advances musically. This is not a bad thing at all if you like this style (which I do), but if you are looking for them to go to a different level, you may be disappointed. Again, they serve us a healthy platter of strong, powerful and uplifting "warrior metal" to get the blood pumping and swords raised high in the sky. As always, lyrically it leaves no room for questioning their faith and production continues to improve slightly with each release; the instrumental and vocal clarity – even for this style of music – lets each member shine through on each song. [Facedown] Jeff McCormack



COMRADES

COLLECTION: 2010-2011

Warning: this is not traditional metal. *The Collection* comprises 3 previous independent EPs in one full-length for new home Blood & Ink. The post-hardcore found here is mixed with instru-metal (ala Pelican, Red Sparowes, etc.), but with strong indie rock leanings. Only a fraction of the tracks here have vocals and they are usually of the spoken/screamed variety. Some excellent playing here, but looking forward to some stronger songwriting in future releases. [Blood & Ink] Loyd Harp



DEMON HUNTER

TRUE DEFIANCE

Each release seemingly builds upon the excellencies of the previous one, and they have done it again here. Early reviews call this the best DH release to date, and I tend to agree. Even after ten years of recording, they have not lost their edge, and the opening track, "Crucifix," proves it, being one of their heaviest ever. The usual deep, poetic lyrics are present and, even with some new members, the style maintains a similar yet fresh feel and experience. For me, DH continues to impress with each new release, dipping into experimental territory here and there, but never leaving the path too far before returning back to the power and passion we've come to expect. [Solid State] Jeff McCormack



FLYING COLORS

S/T

Neal Morse continues to turn out a ton of music. Here he teams with Mike Portnoy (ex-Dream Theater), Dave LaRue (Dixie Dregs), Steve Morse (Deep Purple) and Casey McPherson (Alpha Rev) to create this reviewer's top pick of 2012 so far. Is this a metal or Christian release? No. Is it simply a fantastic hard rock record? Yes! These 5 musicians turned out this album in 9 days with acclaimed producer Peter Collins (Queensryche) at the helm. All musical styles from the Beatles, to Muse, to metal, to prog are found here with amazingly catchy songs complimented by first-rate musicianship. If this were a major label release there are several songs that would have found their way onto your radios. Highlight songs are "Blue Ocean," "Kayla," and "The Storm." Do your ears a favor and check this one out! [Music Theories/Mascot] Todd Walker



"MIGHTY" SAM MCCLAIN AND KNUT REIERSRUD

ONE DROP IS PLENTY

"Mighty" Sam McClain is an amazing blues, soul, gospel artist with a wealth of history behind him. Take the best elements of BB King, Al Green and Curtis Mayfield and you have Sam McClain. This latest recording he teams up with the European bluesman Knut Reiersrud to get his best solo recording to date. The guitars and vocals are true to form and wonderful to hear together. On this one you'll hear the typical collection of "my baby left me and now I got the blues" songs, soulful songs about the struggle of life as well as gospel tunes about loving each other and giving it all to God. My favorite cut is the emotionally intense soul track called "You Don't Know Nothing" with its gospel organ playing off the blues guitar riffs ... wow! If you are a fan of gospel blues, you must secure this CD. [Valley Entertainment] Michael Larson



VARIOUS ARTISTS

A TRIBUTE OF MERCY: MORTIFICATION TRIBUTE

This independent tribute to Mortification is a true labor of love. Brazilian scene vet

Marllon Matos personally compiled these tracks, comprised largely but not entirely of Brazilian bands. Both stalwarts (Krig, Saint Spirit, USA grinders Eternal Mystery, Brutal War and Tribal Rites) as well as up-and-comers are represented. Compilation highlight is Krig's ultra-heavy version of Morti's ubiquitous "Grind Planetarium." Proceeds benefit the band and this digital download is available for donations through organizer Matos' blog. [Mortification] Loyd Harp



OSKORD WEAPON OF HOPE

As comparison to Holy Blood is inevitable, let's get that out of the way. While *Shining Sun* is a great listen, its strength – namely its diversity from song to song – is also its weakness. Folk instrumentals, oi punk cum celtic anthems, nautical themes, blackened folk metal riffs are all present, which make for a fun record, but it means some sacrifice of cohesiveness. *Weapon of Hope*, on the other hand, has the opposite problem. A cohesive vision of folk metal (and nothing else – even the black metal roots have been pulled up) has been achieved, yet the lack of diversity in the riffs (especially the transition between tracks 3 and 4) makes it difficult to distinguish between songs. Even still, this is one of the strongest Christian offerings in the folk-metal genre so far. Fans of Eluveitie and Skyclad will eat this up. [Soundmass] Loyd Harp



LANCE KING A MOMENT IN CHIROS

This is the latest album from the golden voice of heavy metal, Lance King, whose singing soars on standout tracks "Awakening" and "A Given Choice." This is a really good progressive/power metal album, though the music took a bit longer to grow on me than Lance's past efforts. The lyrics, however, never really settled well. The focus of this concept album is the 11:11 time prompt phenomena. I've yet to understand how this belief aligns, if at all, with Christianity. There aren't any negative topics to be found, but the theology does seem a bit askew. Not as accessible, lyrically or musically, as Lance's other albums, metal fans should still strongly consider obtaining *A Moment in Chiros*. [Nightmare] Chris Beck



GREG X DREAM

No, this is not Greg X. Volz of Petra fame. It's the solo album from Greg X, a Polish born guitarist, who lives in London and teaches at a guitar school there, and what an ice breaker it is! He majors in '80s style melodic hard rock/ AOR, and fills out the band with Ken Tamplin doing all the vocals and songwriting and Jay Schellen (Asia) on drums. It is great to hear Tamplin's familiar voice after so long and if this was a new Shout album, it would be a success. *Dream* does resemble the Shout rockers and ballads formula, with a little more in the way of guitar flare and the Rainbow-inspired opener "As the World Spins Round." And BTW, thankfully "Wake Me (Before You Go)" is not a Wham cover. Recommended for hard rock nuts. [gregxmusic.com] Chris Gatto



DEBTOR BLOODSEEDS

Another weapon in Blood & Ink's hardcore arsenal. I've got to admit, it seems B&I have cornered the market on Spirit-filled hardcore these days. There's no question where this band's lyrical emphasis lies, as lead screamer Alan passionately screams, "I remember the devotion of your youth – you followed Me so close." Musically the band somehow manages not to tread new ground, yet they don't sound like anyone else – and that's a good thing. [Blood & Ink] Loyd Harp



HARVEST BLOOM LET IT GO EP

I have grown to love HarvestBloom. Their first few recordings were kind of ho-hum female driven AOR, but they have matured very well. This latest EP is a high quality four-song memorable release for fans of Heart or Leaves Eyes. The vocals remind me a lot of Jenny Gullen of Hoi Pollio during her darker years. The mix here is sweet with lots of interesting stuff going on, leaning quite heavy on guitars. Their lyrics are very obviously gospel-centered. "Let It Go" gives us three songs with the title track remixed as an industrial/dance cut. Do check them out. This is intense. [Independent] Michael Larson



TERRAPHOBIA EVILUTION

After a 10-year hiatus while Jelinic played for Mortification, the wait is over for new material. *Evilution* sees lots of fast riffing, quick leads and death-infused snarled vocals (not growls). It's straight-forward thrash, but think Euro-thrash rather than Bay Area. Not necessarily in technicality, but definitely in heaviness! *Evilution* only slows down on one or two tracks, the rest is pretty relentless, that goes for the spiritual lyrics as well. [Soundmass] Loyd Harp



GLASS HAMMER COR CORDIUM

Fans of Glass Hammer will be happy to know that they have released another CD almost a year after their previous *If*. Normally we have to wait a few years between releases, but with *Con Cordium* the band has been referring to it as part two of *If*. It sure does feel like its twin sister, although *Cordium* is a bit darker. Here with the new vocalist and guitar player we peer once again into the band's fascination with Yes. "Dear Daddy" is an amazing emotional track moving in and out of fusion, acoustic and prog rock dealing with the pain of a father's rejection of his son's choices. Fred Schendel has to be one of the most amazing keyboardists of all time and we hear it on this recording. The mix is great and the band is very tight as would be expected. [Arion] Michael Larson



RESISTANCE MOVEMENT THE GREAT CONSTANT

The debut release of this Columbus, OH, band is worth a listen. They blend prog metal with both melodic and hardcore vocals. There are some truly memorable songs here, like: "Circles on the Ceiling," "Release the Slaves" and "Purge the God." Great hooks with lots of changes, wonderful lead guitar and amazing drums. Lyrically they have a passion for God and it's obvious where they're coming from. The downside of the recording is the mix. The record is surely listenable, but sometimes the vocals don't seem to blend well with the music. It tends to be a little more emotional rather than technical. [Independent] Michael Larson

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THROWING DOWN THE GAUNTLET

By Steve Rowe

A SHIFT IN CULTURE

One question a lot of Christians ask themselves is "How can I change my immediate world & my culture in a way that helps them find Faith in Jesus?" Everybody knows my perspectives on what is, & what is not, Christian Music – Rock, Metal or otherwise. I saw all of the flaws in The 80's Jesus Metal Culture first-hand, because I was a part of it myself ... and just like everyone else on earth I have flaws & I sin. However, what I have found in life is that I can stay strong in Faith in Jesus IF I have a daily walk of repentance & reflection. If I am "changed" then hopefully people recognize that change Christ has made in me!

The shift in Christian Rock & Metal culture is that the message has become almost totally irrelevant. Back in The 80's my friends & I not only analyzed what style of music bands were presenting, but equally what they were SAYING – both Christian & Mainstream bands. The blur between Christian & mainstream music in this day & today's culture is impossible to decipher. Thus, despite the failings of 80's Jesus Metal, I continue with the basics of presenting The Christian Faith through my music.

In today's Music Culture, lyrics & perspectives are rarely addressed & analyzed. For example, my albums are always reviewed on musical presentation & very rarely on lyrical presentation also. For me, both are equally important! In order for me to like a band I need to like both what the band is playing & what the band is saying! If I cannot sleep & I put



my ipod on, I still only ever listen to Swedish band Jerusalem. I love their music & their lyrics are 100% soul food! Thus as I fall asleep I am filling my subconscious with Biblical Truth. No other band in the world matches Jerusalem in this regard. But look at their success!?! Really, it does not exist, outside of a certain small sub-culture in Europe!?

Popular Christian Rock culture these days is mostly positive at best. As a reflection on just how temporal this life is. after twice being given 2 hours to live, I understand just how short our time here is. So listen to what you will in "christian" Rock & Metal. But please remember that without a personal faith in Jesus & Him alone having Lordship in your life, you are facing eternity away from God! So as Christians, how do we change our Rock & Metal culture? Firstly examine our personal walk with Jesus & secondly be unashamed of His Name!

Maybe consider. If you have nothing to say concerning the born again Christian faith, then try to battle it out in the mainstream music world. Be a Christian IN that world, but do not present your music as Christian! Dave Ellefson & Mustaine, Alice Cooper & Nicko McBrain are doing this really well! Being Christians in mainstream Bands... Follow their lead! But if you are passionate to win souls, both inside & outside "the church," then consider what you can SAY in your music to make this a reality. I would rather die broke honouring God than die a rich & famous fake!

Consider LISTENING to what your favourite Bands have to SAY! If you do not like the music or what they have to say then do not buy it, or worse, steal it from the Net! Know who you are IN JESUS! If you are unsure, then make that a priority over making music!! We can only change our world for Christ if we are NOT looking for an easy road to become some temporal form of famous. Is Jesus the Lamb of God for you or are YOU a lamb of god with your own personal godhead?



HEAVEN'S METAL

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HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE WILL CHANGE ... SOMEHOW (STAY TUNED)

Heaven's Metal Fanzine, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways: You celebrate new life in Christ and great rock and metal music that does the same, you are put together by a team of diverse yet like-minded metal warriors affectionately known as "the Heaven's Metal Karew," thus giving a broad and authoritative voice, you come out once in a blue moon... Wait! This list has suddenly changed! That is something I hate about you, Heaven's Metal fanzine! I'm sure there are many that have similar disappointment in the lack of regularity on this publication's frequency of printing. Well, the economy seems to be collapsing. One of our biggest advertisers is having to pull back, we are all strapped with life in various degrees, which are helping to cause delays. I have been really struggling to keep HM and Heaven's Metal going. Something's going to change. In order to keep up, you're going to need to contact us via mail (address is printed above) or stay in touch with us via our Facebook page [http://www.facebook.com/pages/Heavens-Metal-Fanzine/47526875933]. This is where you will get official updates on what's going on with this fanzine. If we end up going out of print or slow our frequency even more, we collectively apologize. It has not been our intention to fail. This is NOT the plan, but if that happens, this'll be the last piece of snail mail you'd get.

Doug Van Pelt
Doug Van Pelt

HEAVEN'S METAL FANZINE MAY/JUNE 2012 ISSUE #90

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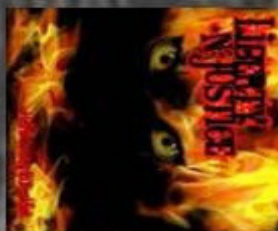
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